

# *Your Child Has a Profound Hearing Loss*



*If your audiologist has described your child's hearing loss as profound, you may have many questions, such as:*

## ***What is profound hearing loss?***

Profound hearing loss describes a total, or nearly total degree of hearing loss. A child with a profound hearing loss will not hear sounds, even in a quiet environment. Children with profound hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services in Massachusetts.

## ***Will my child need hearing aids?***

In some cases, the use of hearing aids will help children with profound hearing loss to hear some sounds and speech. Some children with profound hearing loss may benefit from a cochlear implant, a device which can offer access to a wider range of sound. Your audiologist can help you to know if hearing aids and/or cochlear implants are right for your child.

## ***Does my child need intervention services now?***

All children with hearing loss are eligible for Early Intervention services from birth until the age of three, no matter the degree. We encourage families who have a child with hearing loss to enroll in Early Intervention as early as possible to avoid delays in brain development, speech and language. You will work with your Early Intervention provider to decide the best plan for your child and your family.

Hearing loss is now found in children at a much younger age because of newborn hearing screening. Studies have shown that the earlier children with hearing loss receive Early Intervention, the better the results. Talk to your child's audiologist and doctor and call the **Universal Newborn Hearing Screening Program** at **800-882-1435** for more information. You can also e-mail [newborn.hearing@state.ma.us](mailto:newborn.hearing@state.ma.us).

## ***You might want to consider these tips for your child with a profound hearing loss:***

- Connect with other parents of children with hearing loss. Ask your audiologist or Early Intervention provider if there is a parent group in your area, and consider contacting **Mass Family TIES** to be connected to another family.
- Contact the **Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing**. MCDHH provides many other helpful resources and services, including Children's Specialists who can work with your family to understand the unique needs of children with hearing loss. MCDHH is also a good source of information about helpful technologies for children and adults who have a hearing loss.
- For a good start in developing language, consider enrolling in the **Family Sign Language Program**. In Massachusetts, all families of children with hearing loss are eligible for American Sign Language classes taught in the home. Sign language can give your child earlier access to language, which benefits children's brain development and speech.
- Continue to have your child's hearing tested on a regular basis, as recommended by your audiologist. The audiologist will keep track of your child's hearing in case there are any changes.
- Be sure to let people know it is important to have your child's attention when they talk with your child.
- Cut down or eliminate background noise, for example, television or radio, when speaking or reading to your child. Also make sure that your face is visible when speaking or reading to your child.
- Children with profound hearing loss will need lots of help understanding the meaning of things that happen around them. You can help your child by describing the things that you see and do, and by narrating all of your activities together, such as meals, changing diapers, bath time, and bedtime.
- Seek medical attention whenever you suspect your child has an ear infection.